Governance Essentials

Better humanitarian diplomacy

Key themes for humanitarian diplomacy in the Pacific:
- Disaster risk reduction
- IDRL and emergency preparedness
- Climate change
- Public health and non-communicable diseases
- HIV and AIDS
- Violence
- Gender
- International humanitarian law, auxiliary status, protection of the emblem and dissemination of the fundamental principles

The Savusavu branch of the Fiji Red Cross Society works closely with the chiefly Tikina system to promote disaster risk reduction in local villages.

In May 2012, the IFRC produced its first humanitarian diplomacy strategy for Pacific National Societies. Endorsed by Secretary Generals from each National Society in the region, the strategy provides an overview of current understandings of humanitarian diplomacy in the Pacific, approaches, challenges faced, tools and support required to strengthen and enhance this crucial work.

Humanitarian diplomacy takes a number of forms including: confidential diplomacy, inter-governmental resolutions, environment building, public influence and public advocacy campaigns.

Q. What is humanitarian diplomacy?
A. Persuading decision makers and opinion leaders to act, at all times, in the interests of vulnerable people, and with full respect for fundamental humanitarian principles.

Q. What is advocacy?
A. The deliberate process of pleading in support of, supporting or speaking in favour of someone (a cause or a policy). It is a tool for positive social change.

Q. What is our “auxiliary role”?
A. National Societies’ role as auxiliary to government in the humanitarian field is based in international law. These laws allow Red Cross and Red Crescent societies to mobilize and organize the civilian population to work with public authorities to alleviate human suffering. The auxiliary role is a two-way relationship; this does not imply that the government controls or directs the work of a National Society. The principle of independence calls upon National Societies to maintain their autonomy. They must work in a neutral and impartial manner.
Rescue in Vanuatu

Vanuatu Red Cross Society was on the scene as 60 youth were rescued by helicopter after 5 days lost in the Efate mountains. The Red Cross health and first aid officer was on hand to provide assistance to the youth who had lost their way while hiking as a church group. Despite cool weather and a lack of rations the youth had no major injuries. “The Red Cross and other volunteers did a professional job on the ground” said a church leader.

Vanuatu Red Cross Society worked closely with local and national authorities, the church and paramedics. Red Cross attended the scene at the request of the National Disaster Management Office. The event highlights the National Society’s reputation as a leading provider of first aid training and services. In recent months CARE and World Vision have also hired the Vanuatu Red Cross health team to give first aid training to staff and beneficiaries.

“We are very proud of our health and first aid team – it is well recognised for having excellent training,” said Jacqueline de Gaillande, CEO of the Vanuatu Red Cross Society, “It was very important that we were there to provide assistance to victims if required. Thankfully in this instance everyone was OK.”

Rapid response in Chuuk

On July 18, a fierce fire broke out in an historical building of Weno, the capital of Chuuk state, Micronesia. Six families lost their house and saw their belongings destroyed.

“It's really sad to see the destruction and those families in despair,” said Justin Fritz, branch coordinator of the National Society chapter in Chuuk, “if this house fire happened two months ago, we couldn't really have helped those families. Today, we can respond effectively and assist them with relief items.”

The Micronesia Red Cross Society received disaster relief items from the IFRC just a month before the fire, and completed relief and logistics training only days before the event. “Yesterday we were responding to a small landslide in a simulation exercise, learning how to apply IFRC standard procedures – and now we’re already putting it in practice” said Dominino Always, the volunteer in charge of logistics.

“We were running logistics training in Yap when we received a call from Justin,” says Wayner Louis, the disaster management officer from MRCS. “He explained the situation and asked approval to respond to this disaster. Within a day, Justin had sent us a report, copies of the completed assessment form, the requisition, the waybill, the distribution sheet and an updated inventory sheet. This is really great!”

The Micronesia Red Cross Society wishes to thank the Australian and French Red Cross and the IFRC. Branches now have the tools and confidence to respond quickly to a disaster.
Rural communities equipped

An elder signs to receive his community’s disaster risk reduction kit.

Fifteen communities received disaster risk reduction kits as part of the second phase of the Together, Becoming Resilient project of the Solomon Islands Red Cross.

According to Cyril Bakale, the program logistics officer who distributed the kits, August was a busy month: “A number of water-scarce communities received water tanks from the Red Cross. The rest have received shelter and garden kits.” Cyril and his team of volunteers distributed kits in Santa Cruz (Temotu Province), Central Kwaraae (Malaita Province), Vella La Vella, Kolombangara and Rannogha (Western Province).

Communities showed their happiness for the assistance, thanking the project for helping them to manage the potential risks of disasters.

Program volunteers worked hard to deliver kits to fifteen communities in August.

Communities transformed

The project used participatory techniques to improve hygiene and sanitation.

More than 530 people from the remote Baiap and Hor Hor communities now enjoy improved sanitation facilities and better access to water. Infrastructure developed during the two-year project – including 13 bore wells, hand pumps and 151 improved toilets for households and schools – was formally handed over to the Vanuatu Government and local communities last Thursday. Close to 200 people gathered at the new Vanuatu Red Cross Society building in Craig Cove, Ambrym to celebrate the successful conclusion of the project that was developed in response to water shortages in the area.

“The project has helped to transform the lives of many people who face water shortages and challenges because of the volcanic ash” said Jacqueline de Gaillande, CEO of the Vanuatu Red Cross Society. The project was the first of its kind for the National Society, using community participation to improve water, sanitation and hygiene-related behaviours. Red Cross staff and volunteers taught participants about the crucial links between basic hygiene, sanitation and health. The community then identified local health risks and chose ways to reduce their impact.

Australian Red Cross provided funding and technical support for the project. The Department of Geology, Mines and Water Resources drilled boreholes for the project, helping to improve community access to water. Vanuatu Red Cross Society provided technical support and building materials for people wanting to construct new toilets. In October 2011 the Vanuatu Red Cross Society and Australian Red Cross started a second water and sanitation project in the area that will run until 2013.

The impact of the project has been significant. Surveys found reported rates of diarrhoea had dropped from 20 per cent to just 7 per cent after the introduction of improved water access and sanitation.
PNG Disaster Risk Reduction

The Papua New Guinea Red Cross Society has embarked upon the second phase of its community resilience and safety programme, supported by the IFRC.

In August 2012, a community agreement was signed between government representatives, members of the National Society’s Morobe branch and community leaders from two of the most vulnerable suburban city wards in Lae: Tent City and West Taraka. The ceremony was witnessed by the IFRC.

Following the signing, the Morobe branch conducted a week-long planning workshop. It was attended by 40 participants, including women, youth, school teachers and government development officers. The group conducted a community dreaming exercise, and used appreciative enquiry techniques to look at their strengths to build resilience.

The Papua New Guinea Red Cross Society intends to replicate the community competency process and conduct vulnerability and capacity training in five branches over the next three years.

Lae leaders sign the community agreement

First global youth conference

The Global Youth Conference will reinforce the important contribution made by young people.

In December 2012, the inaugural global conference for Red Cross and Red Crescent youth will be held in Vienna, Austria. The theme is “Youth as agents of change... Making a difference in the world around you”. The conference is inspired by the youth declaration made at Solferino in 2009 and the IFRC youth policy adopted by the General Assembly in November 2011.

The global conference is an important next step that builds upon the success of the first Pacific youth forum held in May. It reinforces young people’s important contribution toward meeting humanitarian challenges, builds regional networks and partnerships with other youth organizations and promotes youth engagement in the Movement.

What can my National Society do?

• Support the participation of young leaders
• Mobilize resources to ensure strong Pacific representation

For more information:

For information about the conference programme or participation, email Karl Zarhuber of the Austrian Youth Red Cross (karl.zarhuber@ifrc.org). Please also inform Pacific youth network committee members Aaron Turner (aaron_r_turner@yahoo.com.au) and Sevuloni Ratu (sevu_ratu@hotmail.com).
Shoken programme complete

The Vanuatu Red Cross Society conducted a final monitoring workshop to conclude the seven-month Youth Helping Youth project, supported by the Empress Shoken fund. The workshop involved 24 youth from communities across Efate Island.

The project’s goal was to train Efate youth in elements of the Youth as Agents of Behavioural Change model, to enable them to support their communities in disaster response, basic first aid, health and hygiene promotion – without discrimination.

Following the positive results of this powerful and successful pilot, the National Society will seek support to extend the project to other islands of Vanuatu.

Stronger, safer communities

The Tuvalu Red Cross Society is playing an increasing role in reducing the vulnerability of Tuvaluan communities. The IFRC regional office is supporting a community safety and resilience project funded by an anonymous donor.

In August, the regional health delegate provided technical support to strengthen National Society skills in program management and implementation, assist with the development and implementation of a monitoring and evaluation framework, and help coordinate the project.

The project’s goal is to strengthen the capacity of the National Society and their local communities to reduce disaster risks through community-based first aid training. First aid is a key pillar for building safer and more resilient communities, which in turn reduces the impact of disasters and risks to health.

Tuvalu is vulnerable to major disasters; there are often not enough emergency vehicles and personnel available to respond quickly, leaving communities to rely on their own skills to save lives. Furthermore, many people from outer islands find it impossible to access the hospital in the capital. “First aid is an essential component of rapid and efficient emergency response,” said IFRC regional health delegate Dr Jessie Kanhu：“preventative actions and community information in disaster-prone areas limits the human impact and the cost of emergency operations”.

Until this year, Tuvalu Red Cross Society activities have been largely confined to the Funafuti and the two central Islands Nukufetau and Vaitupu due to lack of funds and human resources. This year, the National Society has launched first aid training in the outer islands.
On Monday 13 August, the Fiji Red Cross Society, together with the ICRC and IFRC celebrated the 63rd anniversary of the Geneva Conventions of 1949. The media also joined in the celebrations.

At the celebrations, director general Filipe Nainoca highlighted the National Society’s international humanitarian law programme, of which the Geneva Conventions are the cornerstone. In this programme, the society’s strategic goal is to increase public awareness of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and promote international humanitarian law in order to promote respect and support for the work of the Movement in Fiji.

Filipe added that in carrying out the programme, the Fiji Red Cross focuses on awareness raising and creating understanding and respect for the four Geneva Conventions and three additional protocols. This is carried out in conjunction with dissemination of the components of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and the role of its members, the emblem, and the seven fundamental principles.

**The Geneva Conventions of 1949 protect...**

1. Wounded and sick in armed forces in the field
2. Wounded, sick and shipwrecked members of armed forces at sea
3. Prisoners of war
4. Civilian persons in time of war
A new beginning

Community members gathered in Craig Cove in August to celebrate the opening of a new Red Cross building that will strengthen disaster preparedness and support health care on Ambrym Island, Vanuatu. The council of chiefs, member of parliament Jose Masmas and representatives of the Malampa Provincial Government joined representatives of the Vanuatu Red Cross Society and Australian Red Cross to open the new building.

The Vanuatu Red Cross Society has worked with the Australian Red Cross – who provided funding for the building – to deliver water, hygiene and sanitation projects in Ambrym since 2010. The sub-branch building will be used to hold community trainings, increase community involvement and store emergency relief items.

Jacqueline de Gaillande, CEO of the Vanuatu Red Cross Society, said the building will help Red Cross to develop its services in the area: “This building will allow us to better help the people of Ambrym, providing support in health, first aid and now with this building, disaster preparedness.”

Call for proposals

White Ribbon Day marks the international day for the elimination of violence against women. This is a global event observed on 25 November each year.

Australian Red Cross has funding available to support Pacific Island Red Cross Societies to commemorate this year’s White Ribbon Day. Activities should be designed to raise public support by encouraging colleagues and friends to wear a white ribbon and promote values of non-violence.

Why wear a white ribbon?

Wearing a white ribbon is a personal pledge that the wearer is opposed to violence against women, and is committed to supporting community action to stop the violence.

Activities can involve a people from across the community. Possible partners could include men’s and young men’s organisations, sporting clubs, businesses, police officers and men and women in media. Each National Society may apply for up to AUD$4,000. For more information, contact Katrina Neville: kneville@redcross.org.au.

Key dates 2012:

14 September Proposal deadline
22 October Applicants notified
4 November Distribution of funds
21 December Report deadline
Disaster shelter in progress

The Nukulaelae shelter will house the remote island’s disaster relief supplies.

In the aftermath of the 2011 drought, Tuvalu Red Cross Society will build a shelter in Nukulaelae to stock relief supplies for times of emergencies.

The Australian Red Cross agreed to support the initiative, currently being led by the disaster officer and two volunteers from Funafuti. The team hopes to complete the construction work within three weeks and has high hopes for the arrival of a ship arriving soon after work is complete, to return them home. Some of the relief stocks for the Nukulaelae shelter are purchased locally; others are being sent from Australia.

This is the second shelter to be built, following the establishment of a building in Vaitupu in 2010. Tuvalu Red Cross Society plans to build a relief shelter for every branch, and intends to seek funds to enable the next phase of construction and pre-positioning of stock.

Peer exchange a hit

Danny Vakapora from the Cook Islands facilitates a Samoa Red Cross Society planning workshop.

In August, the Samoa Red Cross Society received a visit from Danny Vakapora, Cook Islands Red Cross Society’s manager of HIV and blood donation programs. Toakase Ratu, regional programme officer for HIV, sexually transmitted diseases and blood donation, was in Samoa to observe the exchange: “I’m happy to recommend more peer exchange visits after witnessing the excellent collaboration between the Cook Islands and Samoan National Societies.”

The exchange demonstrated the qualities of a successful mentoring and regional partnership:

**Enthusiasm**: Danny’s willingness to share his experiences in the Cook Islands was infectious. His Samoan counterparts were open to sharing the realities on the ground, including successes and constraints.

**Support at all levels**: Managers in both countries as well as program personnel were instrumental to making the visit a success.

**Participation**: The involvement of local counterparts ensured ownership of the work plan across relevant departments of the Samoan Red Cross Society.

**Technical knowledge**: Relevant expertise is critical to the establishment of such a relevant and practical work plan.

**Flexibility**: Danny was adaptable and went above and beyond his role, even stepping in as keynote speaker for the Samoa Red Cross pageant at short notice.

**Camaraderie and sensitivity**: With a warm welcome from the host National Society, Danny worked to ensure that plans were adapted to the local needs and ways of doing things.
Learning Together

Disaster management in review

The Fiji Red Cross Society has embarked upon a comprehensive review of its disaster management work.

The Fiji Red Cross Society embarked upon a strategic review of disaster management activities. The key objective is “to strengthen and increase the capacity of FRCS in their Disaster Management programme in the key areas of program delivery, monitoring and evaluation, response and preparedness, and successfully meeting the needs of our beneficiaries”.

Phase one was carried out during the second week of July. The review workshop aimed to ensure that the disaster management program upholds the goals of the National Society’s Strategic Plan 2014, and that it meets the needs of staff, volunteers and beneficiaries. The workshop achieved its aims thanks to the commitment of staff and volunteers from headquarters and all branches. Participants were enthusiastic and contributed constructively to discussions and activities.

Demonstrating Fiji Red Cross Society’s commitment to the strategic review, personnel have already begun implementing the recommended changes from the phase one workshop. Actions include enhancing and formalising systems for distributing non-food items and health in emergencies relief items during disasters.

The next phase of the strategic review will engage branches and volunteers to gather flood experiences and revise the Fiji Red Cross Society disaster response plan and standard operating procedures. The team will strengthen key training areas, such as initial damage assessments and emergency operations centre management.

Four phases of the review:

1. A review workshop to better understand the Red Cross response during the Vitu Levu floods of January and March.
2. Examining engagement with branches, volunteers & beneficiaries.
3. Addressing stakeholder engagement
4. Implementing change through knowledge sharing with volunteers and staff, branch support and training.

Throughout the review: Strengthening the disaster response plan and standard operating procedures.

Ready in Samoa

The 2009 earthquake and tsunami was an important reminder of Samoa’s vulnerability.

Twenty Red Cross volunteers participated in disaster management training in Samoa, to equip them with the skills and knowledge to respond more effectively during natural disasters. The training was conducted at the Red Cross headquarters at Moto’otua by Damien Jeanniot, the Logistics Coordinator of the French Red Cross in Noumea.

In 2009 the close-knit community of 200,000 people was rocked by an earthquake and tsunami that resulted in significant loss of life and rendered thousands homeless. “Samoa is also one of the countries greatly affected by climate change,” said Damien, “it is no doubt that there are families who are suffering and therefore need assistance.”

Samoa Red Cross Society has built a team of approximately one thousand volunteers, and has established storage facilities in Lepa/Lotofaga, Fagaloa, Manono, Tuasivi and Falealupu. It plans to build more infrastructure in the future.
Over many years, the first aid program of the Solomon Islands Red Cross has touched numerous lives across the county: in rural communities, homes, workplaces, youth groups, and among Red Cross staff and volunteers. The National Society has now set itself an ambitious goal: to reach all Solomon Islanders with life-saving first aid skills. 2012 has been an important year for the National Society.

Between April and July 2012, Solomon Islands Red Cross first aiders carried out training for business houses, public institutions including governmental ministries and nine rural communities – in Guadalcanal, Santa Isabel, Temotu, and Western Provinces.

“The target audiences for first aid training are exposed to various hazards, from sickness and accidents to natural disasters, and many are too far from the next health post” said Hotoravu Alenge, Solomon Islands Red Cross first aid officer.

The National Society had two important boosts to its first aid programme this year:

• **The 11th Festival of the Pacific Arts:** In preparation for the arts festival, Solomon Islands Red Cross trained over 100 youth to deliver first aid to spectators. The National Society’s work was supported by the arts festival organizers and New Zealand Red Cross.

• **Partnership with CRANAplus:** Three instructors have now received first aid certificates after completing e-learning modules online. CRANAplus was founded in 1983 by remote area nurses across Australia; its training is aligned with the Australian qualifications framework.

On 15-16 August, staff and volunteers of Tuvalu Red Cross participated in first aid training, facilitated by New Zealand Red Cross program coordinator Peter Winthrop. Eighteen participants attended the first aid training, including three National Society staff.

“Key lessons during the workshop included primary and secondary assessments, bleeding, shock and fainting,” said secretary general Tataua Pese, “not only did we learn through verbal teaching, but trainees gained so much knowledge through clear demonstrations and practical exercises.”

Following the first workshop, eight interested staff and volunteers continued to the training-of-trainers session. The workshop lasted five days, covering the planning, teaching, discussion and demonstration of First Aid for communities. In order to increase their confidence teaching communities and branches, instructors were given the chance to organise scenarios and practise their teaching skills.

As part of the Tuvalu Red Cross community resilience programme instructors will travel to the outer islands to deliver first aid training to communities, while commercial first aid training will be promoted on Funafuti.

In June, the Tuvalu Red Cross Society trained Junior Boy Scouts in essential first aid skills. Topics included primary assessment, stable side position, making stretcher using blankets and responding to wounds and bleeding.
Learning Together

Big Bay trains

The National Society trained men and women in six communities.

In July and August, Vanuatu Red Cross Society and CARE International joined forces to provide basic first aid in six remote villages of Big Bay, Espírito Santo Island. Two first aid instructors from the Vanuatu Red Cross Society led the workshops, as part of a disaster risk reduction initiative. The workshops contained important information about responding to choking and near-drowning, two dangers that are common to the communities, which are located near rivers.

“The first aid training was very important and interesting to all those villages” said Xavier Watt, co-facilitator of the workshops, “these communities have large populations, but the nearest clinic is far from here.” Upon presentation of the first aid certificates, Vanuatu Red Cross Society received a big thank you from each of the village chiefs.

Villages trained:
Malo
Pesena
Peamatsina
Peavot
Pelivusu
Tsereviu

IDRL meets Pacific Islands Forum

Special congratulations go to the Cook Islands Red Cross Society and IFRC for their success promoting international disaster response law within the Pacific region.

The Cook Islands Red Cross Society has spearheaded a landmark resolution at the Pacific Islands Forum. In August, the Cook Islands Red Cross Society completed a detailed study on the policy and legal framework for managing foreign disaster response in the Cook Islands. The study was presented to the Cook Islands government in a handover ceremony. A week later, a resolution in support of international disaster response law was enshrined in the official communiqué of the Pacific Islands Forum.

Lorraine Mangwiro, head of the IFRC regional office for the Pacific, provided the opening address at the handover ceremony: “Preparedness for disaster response is everyone’s business. It is the role of each and every sector and therefore having the stakeholders’ workshop with representatives from the government, civil society, donors and the private sector providing input into this report gives it real credibility and authority.”

The 43rd Pacific Islands Forum was held in the Cook Islands from 28-30 August. It was attended by heads of state and governments from across the region. Central themes included sustainable development, health, gender equality, climate change and disaster risk reduction.

Representatives from the Cook Islands introduced the resolution on international disaster response law, drafted with the support of their National Society. The resolution was adopted by forum participants:

**The resolution:**

73. Leaders encouraged Forum Members to consider the International Disaster Response Law Guidelines developed by the International Federation of the Red Cross (IFRC) and to take appropriate measures to strengthen their national policy, and institutional and legal frameworks in collaboration with their National Red Cross Societies, IFRC, the United Nations and other relevant partners.
Learning Together

An eye on El Niño

El Niño brings increased cyclone risk to some countries, including the Cook Islands and Samoa.

The Pacific region is experiencing a very weak El Niño. From here, the El Niño may weaken further, but is more likely to become a weak-to-moderate event. This would significantly impact disaster and health risks in the Pacific Islands over the coming year. Unusual rainfall patterns, storms, fires, and changes to livelihoods and disease brought by El Niño can cause humanitarian emergencies.

Every El Niño event is different, and scientists pay close attention to the ocean temperature and the atmosphere in order to predict what rainfall will be like. We need to continue monitoring seasonal forecasts for the latest information to see how it may affect rainfall in coming months.

What is El Niño?
During El Niño, water in the equatorial Pacific Ocean becomes warmer than average. When this happens, the atmosphere above the ocean reacts. Changing wind patterns push rainclouds away, and we see unusual rainfall patterns. Effects can include changes in storms, floods, landslides, fires, shifts in fisheries, abnormal cropping seasons, and increased incidence of disease. An El Niño event can last for 12 months, recurring every 2-7 years.

What can my National Society do?
1. Contact your local meteorological department to receive their forecasts and updates.
2. Hold meetings to discuss the possible effects of El Niño. Partners may include national disaster managers, health agencies, and UN agencies at the national and regional level.
3. Identify people and locations that might be most vulnerable and develop contingency plans.
4. Contact David O’Meara at the IFRC for advice and support: david.omeara@ifrc.org

How might El Niño affect my country?

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<th>Country</th>
<th>Effect</th>
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| **The Cook Islands** | North: wetter, warmer  
South: drier, cooler  
Higher risk of cyclones |
| **Fiji**         | Suva: dry season drier, cooler in wet and dry season  
Nadi: wet season drier and warmer,  
dry season drier and cooler  
Slightly higher risk of cyclones |
| **Kiribati**     | Rainfall higher, maximum temperatures warmer |
| **Micronesia**   | Pohnpei: drier dry season, higher rainfall in wet season, warmer  
Yap: drier dry season, warmer |
| **Palau**        | Drier, longer, dry season, warmer minimum temperatures, lower maximum temperatures |
| **Papua New Guinea** | Port Moresby: drier, cooler wet season, possible later start to monsoon  
Kavieng: wet season wetter, warmer nights, cooler days  
Lower risk of cyclones |
| **Samoa**        | Drier wet season  
Higher cyclone risk |
| **Solomon Islands** | Delayed start to monsoon, drier, warmer wet season, cooler dry season  
Higher cyclone risk |
| **Tuvalu**       | Funafuti: wetter dry season, warmer wet season  
Nanumea: wetter wet season, warmer wet season  
Cyclone risk higher |
| **Tonga**        | Nuku’alofa: cooler, lower rainfall  
Lupepau’u: drier, no temp difference to normal  
Slightly higher risk of cyclones |
| **Vanuatu**      | Port Vila: late start to wet season, lower rainfall in wet and dry season,  
cooler in dry season  
No enhanced level of cyclone risk |

Welcomes and farewells

A big welcome to **Sandra Faanunu**, Tonga Red Cross Society’s newly appointed finance manager. Thanks and farewell to delegate **Robert Neilson**, following a successful stint supporting the Tonga Red Cross Society team during an important period of change. Welcome to **Dedy Undrue**, IFRC finance development delegate based in Vanuatu. Dedy will support National Societies across the region. Congratulations to IFRC disaster management coordinator **Ysabeau Rycz** on her new arrival, **baby Ethan**.